




# ILLUSIONS OF ADULTING

by Sara Zimmerman



Ethan, thanks for letting  
me come over.

Fasho. What  
are friends for?



So, why don't you tell  
me all about that fight  
of yours with Steve  
over more wine?

ILLUSION:

It's so refreshing to  
have a nice guy friend  
that I can trust and  
feel safe with.



REALITY:

Well it all began...



...BLAH BLAH BLAH...



Wow. Steve sounds terrible and should treat you like a goddess. Tell me more...



...BLAH BLAH BLAH...



Uh, huh... go on...

...BLAH BLAH BLAH...



STOP!



What are you doing?  
I thought we were  
just friends?

A comic panel featuring two characters. On the left, a girl with short blonde hair, wearing a red tank top and teal pants, has a shocked expression with wide eyes and an open mouth. On the right, a boy with short blonde hair, wearing a green t-shirt, is gesturing with his right hand towards the girl while speaking. The background is a simple blue gradient.

Well, we are friends...

I'm not looking for a relationship, just taking it to the next level. I mean, c'mon. We've hung out a bunch, we've opened up to each other. I just thought that's what you wanted.

WHAT?  
Are you KIDDING?



Well YOU'RE the one who kept giving me attention.



Oh my goodness...  
you're totally right.



I didn't even realize that giving each other this much attention is what two people do who like each other... I guess I thought it would be okay to open up to a guy friend and spend time together like this.

C'mon, Steve seemed cool  
with us hanging out.



Plus, I've invested so much time  
and energy into our friendship that  
I thought I'd get something more  
in return. I know we're attracted to  
each other, so what's the big deal?  
We're just friends... with benefits.




Just because I gave you attention  
as a friend does NOT give you the  
right to manipulate the situation so  
I will sleep with you.  
This is NOT what a friendship is.



I'm sorry, but I'm  
**ENGAGED**. This whole thing  
is totally inappropriate.

But we ARE just friends...

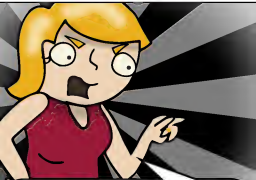
A cartoon character with short, wavy blonde hair and a green t-shirt. The character has a wide-eyed, slightly awkward expression with a small, open-mouthed smile. Their right hand is raised with fingers spread. The background is a simple blue gradient.

...and I really like your  
friendship... especially when  
I'm not with another girl.


So not just a friend, but  
a "backup" girlfriend!!!



Wow... so you're a typical  
emotionally-unavailable narcissist scared  
of commitment who fuels addictive  
behaviors by looking for the "next best  
thing" because you're too scared to deal  
with reality. And to think that I put so  
much energy into you...



I trusted you to be honest with me and respect my relationship with Steve. Manipulating me against him is so, so, so narcissistic. That's not what friends do.



Ethan, I feel so  
BETRAYED and HURT.





You only want me because I'm safely unavailable since I'm already in a relationship, getting me in bed will boost your ego, and deep down you think that I'll help you work out your unaddressed childhood trauma.


But, please... don't abandon me...  
I love you unconditionally. I need  
someone to unconditionally love me...





Just stop. Only YOU  
can fill that hole,  
buddy. No one else.



A comic panel featuring two characters with blonde hair. The character on the left is a woman with a red tank top, looking surprised with wide eyes and an open mouth. The character on the right is a man with a green shirt, looking concerned with a frown and wide eyes. A large speech bubble from the man contains the text 'Look, I'm sorry for the part I played in this and take full responsibility for my behavior.' A smaller speech bubble from the woman contains the text 'But, for the sake of you and everyone, get some real help... and INTEGRITY!'.

Look, I'm sorry for the part I  
played in this and take full  
responsibility for my behavior.

But, for the sake of you and  
everyone, get some real help...  
and INTEGRITY!

Oh, and speaking of integrity, you  
need to now take responsibility  
for your actions. You owe me  
AND Steve an apology.



And if you ever see Steve...

...you'd better be ready  
because I bet he won't  
stop at just one punch!



TO BE CONTINUED...

by Sara Zimmerman / Unearthed Comics

Soooo.... yeah.

When have you set  
boundaries (without  
violence) worth  
celebrating?

Share your experience  
in the comments below.